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ABSTRACT

The final conference of the Council for Cultural Co-operation's Project No. 8 on "Innovation in Primary Education in Europe" was held in Nice, France from November 30 to December 2, 1987. Involving approximately 120 participants, the conference brought together delegates from the Council's member states, representatives of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, and observers from the host country, non-member states, and other international institutions and international non-governmental organizations. Contents of this general report of the project's final conference provide: (1) a statement of the aims of the conference and the conduct of the proceedings; (2) a description of Project No. 8 and its historical background; (3) a summary of conference speeches concerning, first, the presentation of the project's final report and, second, external assessment and self-assessment in the school education system; and (4) a synopsis of discussions and conclusions of working groups. Appendices provide lists of participants, case studies carried out in the course of the project, and contact schools; a paper more extensively discussing external assessment and systemic management, self-assessment and autonomous management, and negotiated assessment and interactive management in the school education system, in terms of natural science, human science, and comprehensive sciences models; and the conference agenda. (RH)

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Project No. 8 of the CDCC

"Innovation in primary education"

Final conference

Nice, Monday 30 November – Wednesday 2 December 1987

General report

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Strasbourg 1988

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Project No. 8 of the CDCC

"INNOVATION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION"

Final Conference

Nice, Monday 30 November - Wednesday 2 December 1987

General Report

by

Jean-Michel SIVIRINE
Inspector of the Essonne Academy
General Rapporteur of the Project Group

Strasbourg 1988

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1. INTRODUCTION

The final Conference of the CDCC's Project No. 8 on "Innovation in primary education in Europe", was held in Nice from 30 November to 2 December 1987. It was organised by the French authorities with the assistance of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CDCC) of the Council of Europe, and brought together some 120 participants (see Appendix I):

- delegates from the member states of the CDCC;
- the representatives of the Standing Conference of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, another Council of Europe body;
- observers from non-member states;
- observers from other international institutions;
- observers from international non-governmental organisations;
- observers from the host country, France.

2. AIMS OF THE CONFERENCE AND CONDUCT OF PROCEEDINGS

2.1 Aims

The aims of the Conference were:

2.1.1 To present the results of the work carried out by Project Group No. 8 as described in the final report (provisional edition). The report draws on a large number of sources of information, including:

- symposia, conferences, seminars, research workshops and other meetings on specific or general themes connected with innovation, attended by Project Group members, other senior officials, academics and field workers;
- case studies (see Appendix II) of innovations put into effect in member States as part of the normal conduct of their education systems;
- a network of 12 "contact schools" (see Appendix III), providing liaison between schools engaged in introducing similar innovations.

2.1.2 To examine the final report and its conclusions in detail and to discuss the recommendations that it contains: the conclusions reflect possible practical foundations for innovation by linking innovation explicitly to the main topics of current debate (curriculum content, mathematics and science teaching, the technological revolution, the introduction of a European dimension in education, and so forth). They also emphasise the need to promote multi-disciplinary research, co-ordinated at European level, on the situation of children in schools.

After examining and discussing the Project Group's report, the participants were able to offer ideas and suggestions for incorporation in the conclusions and recommendations.

2.1.3 To develop strategies for disseminating the results of the Project and for its follow-up.

2.2 The proceedings

2.2.1 The programme of the Conference comprised:

- statements and debates in plenary session;

- discussions in working groups, the outcome of which was then presented to the Conference in plenary session.

2.2.2 There was also an exhibition that provided a clear, lively and extremely interesting account of the work of the "contact schools" network and the outstanding achievements with which these 12 schools had been closely associated during the Project. The exhibition also included three of the "case studies" carried out in France during the period of the Project: "The use of the micro-computer in primary schools at Bar-le-Duc", "Relations between schools and interaction between the school and its social environment: the Grigny educational priority zone", and "Assistance to isolated schools in mountain regions: the EMALA".

Periods were set aside in the formal Conference agenda for visiting the exhibition or viewing the related audio-visual documents (see Appendix II); but at other times too the participants took an intense interest in it and listened attentively to the exhibitors' long and detailed answers to their questions about the nature of the innovations that were being introduced. The useful contacts thus established, and the quality of the exhibits themselves, were certainly a major contributory factor to the success of the Conference.

Chaired by Mr Yves Martin[1], Head of the General Inspectorate of Education in France, the Conference was opened on behalf of the French Minister of Education, Mr Didier Linotte, Rector of the Nice Academy. In his address, Mr Linotte emphasised the importance of the work done by Project Group No. 8, with particular reference to two key words that he considered essential: "team-work" and "continuity". He described the hopes he placed in the Conference proceedings and, more generally, his belief that the CDCC's work in the field of education would help society to find a way out of its present difficulties. He referred in conclusion to his resolve that education should not become imprisoned in the narrow dialectic gap between living with differences and working for integration, and he asked the participants to think about what united them, namely Europe's cultural identity.

Replying, Mr Maitland Stobart, Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport, Council of Europe, thanked the French authorities for their long-standing offer to organise the final Conference of this important project, as this was evidence of the importance they attached to the crucial question of innovation in primary education. After briefly retracing the activities of the Council of Europe in the cause of education and teaching, and after thanking all the members of the Project Group for their excellent work (with a special mention for the Group's chairman and General Rapporteur), Mr Stobart appealed to all those attending the Conference to ensure that that work continued; he mentioned the possibility of conferences or national symposia, films or video documents, books and other literature, and was sure that the Conference would come up with some imaginative ideas. Project No. 8 first saw the light of day at the Vaduz Conference in November 1982, and there was no reason why the movement launched then should terminate now, like the Project, in Nice.

2.2.4 Under Mr Martin's attentive and benevolent eye, the business of the Conference proceeded with statements from Jean-Michel Sivirine, Inspector of Education in the Department of Essone and General Rapporteur of the Project Group, and later from Professor Jean-Richard Cardinet of the Educational Research and Documentation Institute of French-speaking Switzerland. Chapter 4 of this report contains summaries of their statements.

Next, the working groups met for lively and informative discussion, giving participants an opportunity to convey their impressions and say whether they agreed with the conclusions, had reservations about particular points or any amendments and alterations to suggest. Joint reports on the two working group sessions were presented with wit and panache to the plenary sitting of the Conference by two eminent members of Project Group No. 8, Mr Don Hollingsworth, HMI, and Professor Maurice Galton, of the University of Leicester, consultant to the Project Group. Their reports are reproduced in full in chapter 5.

2.2.5 The closing address was delivered by Mr Louis Baladier, Director of Schools with the French Ministry of Education. He noted that the States had sent top-level delegations to represent them at the Conference and, remarking on the high standard of debate, he wondered what it was about the educational systems and their recent developments that had brought about this need to ascribe operational objectives to the school as an institution, by contrast with earlier times, not so very far in the past, when the schools were not the target of any such concerned inquiry; for him, democracy in education was the point of imbalance after which it had become standard practice to ask pointed questions about schools and their objectives.

On the subject of innovation in the strict sense, he drew attention to the doubtless inevitable transition from (innovationist) intentions to (pragmatic) policies, a transition without which there could be no progress beyond some rather esoteric speech-making. He took the opportunity to mention the technocratic structures which by definition were resistant to change and would, given the chance, institutionalise innovation by depriving it of all significance; and he had doubts about the role of the "intermediate agencies", first among which was the inspectorate.

In conclusion he spoke about the European identity which he saw as being torn between nostalgia (the Spanish and French Golden Ages, the Italian Quattrocento) and the lure of rock culture "soft ideology" and the like. European culture ... or European civilisation? On that crucial question, Mr Baladier ended his statement.

After Mrs Giulia Podesta, Head of the School Education Division, Council of Europe, had once again thanked the French authorities, the Conference chairman and participants, the members of Project Group No. 8 and all the others involved for their help in making this event a success, the Conference was formally closed.

3. CONCISE PRESENTATION OF PROJECT No. 8, AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

"Innovation in primary education" is the theme of a five-year project in which the 24 member States (1) of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (2) of the Council of Europe have been taking part. This project was the main activity on the CDCC's school programme and it concerned the 5-6 and 11-12 year age-groups. It started in 1983 and went on until 1987.

This project represented the first sustained effort undertaken by the Council of Europe in the field of primary education. It was the response to a need in member States to look at a period of compulsory education which has so far not often been examined and discussed in depth in the framework of an intergovernmental organisation and which is at present the object of review or reform in most of Western Europe.

3.1 Concise presentation

Primary education is the foundation stage in the education of all Europeans, and many States are reviewing the quality and effectiveness of their primary schools. The aim of the project was to provide member states with advice on the planning, implementation and management of innovation in primary education, at national and regional level, at a time of economic constraint and of rapid social and technological change.

After analysing a number of innovation projects in member States and the processes linked to educational innovation, the Project Group defined the need for innovation as the result of pressures put on the school systems by changes in society. The profound and rapid changes European societies are at present confronted with would thus explain the strong need to innovate education which has become apparent over the past few years.

Moreover, our knowledge of child development and of the learning process has been greatly improved over the past decades, which also has a considerable impact on the classroom practice. This being so, we cannot now fail to recognise the existence of a variety of needs and differences among children, reflecting not only differences in our societies but also in the development of learning processes of each individual child. The project devoted considerable effort to examining how such differences could be taken into account by the education system.

Thus the primary school is now being forced to reconsider its position and role in society, notably in order to come out of its isolation and accept a greater interaction with its environment. The project tried to examine how this vital adjustment could best be brought about and recognised the importance for success in innovation of acting on the school systems at different levels (national, regional and local). All levels must feel concerned and involved, in order to overcome resistance to innovation coming from inside the educational systems. The implications of innovation on teacher training, curriculum, teaching methods and school structures were also studied.

3.2 Historical background

Project No. 8 filled a gap in the CDCC's recent work on the education of young children/young people. The first school project of the CDCC (1974-79) dealt with pre-primary education and the early development of the child.

In the late 1970s, under the pressure of growing unemployment and its impact on the social insertion of the young, the CDCC devoted its next school project to upper secondary education. The pre-primary project was thus followed, from 1978 to 1982, by a project known under the title "Preparation for life", which concerned the 14-19 year age-group.

This project indicated that, although much could be done at secondary level towards a solution of youth problems, such as unemployment and marginalisation, quite a number of them could be prevented or lessened through earlier identification, thus recognising the vital importance of the early years of compulsory education.

These results, together with a common concern at national level for a review of primary education, brought the Council of Europe to concentrate its attention for the next few years on the first period of compulsory education and thus, in a way, pick up the threads of the pre-primary project.

3.2.2 The Liechtenstein Conference

In an effort to base the Project on as wide a variety of information and opinions as possible, a consultation of non-governmental organisations concerned with education was held early in 1982, the results of which were presented at the first consultation of member States on the organisation of their primary education systems, the policies adopted and the problems confronted. This consultation took place at a Conference on "Primary education in Western Europe: aims, trends and problems", held in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, from 9 to 12 November 1982. The Conference confirmed the importance of the work about to be undertaken by the Council of Europe on primary education, indicated a variety of ways in which innovations could be introduced in primary education, and identified a number of common concerns. Discernible throughout was a general wish to gain a better knowledge of children's development, bio-rhythms and learning processes, in order to take better account of their specific needs.

3.2.3 1983-85: As the common problem for most countries seemed to lie in implementing innovations, the managing group of the Project (the Project Group) decided to concentrate its work on this aspect. The Project was therefore in two parts:

- general ideas about innovation;

- a detailed study of innovatory areas.

In order to give the project a genuinely practical framework, the Group called for the setting up of a network of contact schools, whereby about 12 establishments at the forefront of the innovation movement in different member States would be brought into context. The network was started in 1984, thus enabling those in charge of the Project:

- to exchange information about schemes in progress in Europe in the field of primary education;

- to ask the teachers and educators actively involved in the innovation progress for their views on the Project from a theoretical standpoint.

It has been agreed that further information on a number of innovatory schemes currently working in the member States would be provided in the form of case studies (14 in all) conducted by independent experts.

1984 marked the beginning of the Project's operational phase. A review of innovation policies started at the symposium on "Innovation in primary education in Western Europe", held at Han (Belgium) in October 1983, and continued on the occasion of the symposium on "Management of innovation in primary education", held at Noordwijk (Netherlands) in October 1984.

A number of educational research workshops on specific curriculum areas also began in 1984 with the teaching of mathematics (Puidoux-Chexbres, Switzerland) and science and the new technologies (Edinburgh, Scotland). The more theoretical activities of 1985 focused on children's needs: a research workshop in Madrid (Spain) on child development was followed in October by a symposium in Rome (Italy) on "Children with specific needs: the handicapped, children with learning difficulties, gifted children".

3.2.4 1986-87: Even in 1985, more especially after 1986, the Project Group began to pursue its activities while showing increasing concern over the way in which the results of its work should be collated, presented and disseminated.

Two important symposia and a research workshop on curriculum problems were organised in 1986: there was a symposium in March on "New technologies and the primary school" (Lyngby, Denmark) and one on "Science and technology in the primary school" (Cambridge, United Kingdom); the workshop was in December, and its subject was "Reading and writing skills in the primary school" (Tilburg, Netherlands).

In 1987, while the finishing touches were being put to the final report, the symposium in Stockholm on "The implementation of innovation in primary education at the local level" brought the programme of work on innovation policies to a close.

4. SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS

4.1 Statement by Mr Jean-Michel Sivirine

Presentation of the final report

The speaker said that the prospect of giving the Conference participants not only a full account of the work done on the Project but also an idea of the enthusiasm shown by all those whose work, at whatever level, had ensured its success, was a daunting one. He did not propose to summarise the report (a summary could be found on page 6) but would adopt a different approach and say what, in the author's opinion, the report was not, what it actually was and what it was intended to be.

4.1.1 To say what the report was not, required one immediately to draw its boundaries. Some of those were, in a sense, external, and were determined by the qualifications and abilities of the Group's members: these included the delegates of the member States, who were senior education officials drawn very largely from the category known as "decision-makers" (those to whom reports were normally submitted ...); then there were the scientific consultants very much involved in the present-day problems of educational research and to whom the report owed a number of its fundamental positions (on ways of achieving

excellence, the learning processes, evaluation, interaction mechanisms etc); and then there was an assortment of field workers engaged in a variety of occupations, whose main characteristic was apparently that they were too busy to have time to reflect and set their thoughts down on paper.

The fact that the authors were such a mixed bunch meant that any idea of producing a genuinely scientific report, such as might have come out of a research project involving experimentation, had to be put aside straight away. Although its scientific sights were not high, the report was nevertheless deliberately pragmatic in character and took observed facts as its starting-point.

A further limitation was inherent to the project itself and was to be explained by its history. It originated at the Conference at Vaduz in November 1982; the conclusions and recommendations adopted at Vaduz had brought Project No. 8 into existence and had in effect set the pattern of its objectives and its activities. However, before the Project was two years on, the members of the Group had agreed that it was beyond their abilities to execute the "order" placed at Vaduz and decided to concentrate their minds on a single point, a central one: innovation in primary education, how far it went and how it was administered. The field opened at Vaduz was too wide and not all the member States felt equally concerned by each of the points raised; also, innovation proved to be the rallying theme which the Group needed in order to work efficiently.

The question of what the report actually was, could be approached in several ways and from several angles.

It was the result of an agreement, and one which the authors saw as absolutely essential. Consensus had been established on each of the important points, and it was clear from the way the report was drafted, that it was a collective endeavour later submitted to all members of the Project Group for their opinion.

It was the result of a considerable volume of work of various kinds (symposia, conferences and seminars, case studies, contact school reports, research workshops, NGO contributions, studies of various kinds), from which better knowledge had been gained of existing innovatory schemes and the arrangements for their implementation.

It was a measure of the differences and similarities between all the member States: densely populated countries, more sparsely populated countries, northern countries, countries of the Mediterranean, the Atlantic or the continent, English-speaking, German-speaking and French-speaking countries, with or without a centralised form of government. The report benefited from all this cross-fertilisation and delivered a message of hope in the quest for the European identity.

It was the "missing link" in the CDCC's work:

. 1974-79: free school education and the child's early development;

. 1978-82: preparation for life (the 14-19 year age group);

. 1982-87: primary education.

Only a small space was left uncovered; this was the time between leaving primary school and embarking upon compulsory education.

It was an endeavour to clarify innovation as an essentially dynamic process, as a vehicle and an instrument by which systems became adapted. Quite deliberately, when discussing the development of society and the educational systems, the report offered some very physical comparisons: parents - pressure - imbalance - search for a new balance (this search being itself a form of pressure and hence a further source of imbalance). Faced with a whole array of external and internal constraints, innovation was the search for a new balance.

Lastly, the report was a very concrete and very pragmatic demonstration of faith in the individual and in relations between individuals. One should not look to structures and organisations for the whole truth, nor yet for the whole solution. True, all educational systems were "systems", many of them highly organised; but none could claim to be the sum of all the work done in every school (just as no school could claim to represent a faithful reflection of the system in its entirety): for in each school there were children, teachers and parents - individuals, all alike and yet all different.

The concept of interaction was an area that called for further research; the report perhaps did not go far enough on this point. Interaction was not a key word so much as a watchword; just as involvement was a watchword (to quote from the report: "successful innovation requires joint involvement of the various decision-making and management levels ... the involvement of the various participants in the educational process, ... judicious involvement in terms of action ...").

4.1.3 Without making any false claims, it was necessary to explain what it was intended that the report should be.

A starting point, first of all or, better still, a comprehensive picture of the situation in the brief moment before the facts and figures from which it was put together came to light again and spread still further. But the speaker warned that working for innovation meant accepting the idea of impermanence. Any process of innovation was doomed, from the moment it started, to end either in extension and generalisation or in marginalisation and death. This was an essential point because over and above the organisational problems that it posed on the structural level, it could engender frustration and incomprehension among teachers. Referring to the snows on the nearby Mercantour summits, he then said that writing the report was like opening up the track of a downhill slalom: after that, it was up to each contestant to find the best course, the one that suited him best.

The report was also intended to provoke discussion. Summing up the papers presented by the participating countries on the occasion of the Vaduz Conference, the General Rapporteur, Colin Richards, had drawn a careful distinction between four major points of convergence - four matters of common concern. These were:

- the drive against inequality of opportunity;

- delegated participation in decision-making on educational matters;

- continuity of educational experience;

- curricula and teaching methods.

Surely, four years after Vaduz, the issues at stake had become clearer and the report's analyses would enable matters to be taken a stage further? Two opposing scenarios lay ahead:

1. either present-day changes, in particular the new information technologies, would simply alter the balance; this was the majority view among members of the Project Group, as reflected in the conclusions and recommendations;

2. or the present-day processes would bring about a structural change, in which case the question of relations between school, society and State would need to be debated in public (like the subject of compulsory schooling at the end of the 19th century). The correct relationship had to be found between basic culture on the one hand and specialised learning, school work and "out of school" learning on the other.

Could not the Council of Europe discover a third way between OECD's "back to base" and Unesco's new social basis for the primary school? Perhaps the report could serve as an instrument for marking it out? Lastly, the report was intended to be an auxiliary for analysis and decision, to be used by all those with responsibility for organising the school systems and implementing innovation. This was the report's most ambitious objective, and the speaker hoped that the Conference participants would make it their business throughout the proceedings to offer uncompromising opinions, criticism, observations and suggestions.

4.1.4 The speaker's concluding remark was addressed mainly to be members of the Project Group, his "teacher colleagues", as he called them. It began with a short literary quotation:

> "They sought it with thimbles, they sought it with care;
> They pursued it with forks and hope;
> They threatened its life with a railway-share;
> They charmed it with smiles and soap."

This was Lewis Carroll hunting the snark. The speaker suggested that innovation might have been the snark of the Project Group members for the past five years.

4.2 Statement by Professor Jean-Richard Cardinet

External assessment and self-assessment in the school education system

The speaker made the point that ever since the beginning of the century, educational theorists, like other social scientists, had been both fascinated and repelled by the positivist approach.

The idea of mastering the complexity of the school environment by rigorous experimental methodology was obviously attractive. It entailed analysing the effect of isolated objective factors without allowing any subjective factors to

interfere, the idea being to develop a rational technology. The use of standardised tests to measure learning was part of this approach to external assessment. In actual fact, however, the conclusions could be generalised to only a very limited extent, which explained why the experimental teaching theory had had so little impact.

Being determined to transform the school eduction system, people therefore concentrated on action and hence on the historical approach, which reflected a receptiveness to all the features specific to each situation. They then acknowledged that it was impossible to draw general conclusions and that the only means of assessing innovations or pupils was internal assessment by those actually involved, in a process of continuous adaptation which might even go so far as to rule out the very idea of appraisal or of examination certificates. The end results were equally unacceptable: research became hidebound and experiences could not be communicated.

The underlying approach of the final report reflected a third conception, itself based on the social psychology of Lewin, who accepted the fact that subjective viewpoints are part of objective reality, that they can be scientifically analysed and that they are actually the main factors determining the behaviour of society.

Assessment was therefore based on the performance of the people concerned, the emphasis being on self-assessment, but with criteria negotiated beforehand. In the school education system, this implied setting objectives but leaving the choice of means of achieving them to the initiative of local education teams. This meant that the criteria for satisfactory performance must be explained to each class, but that the pupils must gradually be made capable of making their own assessment as to whether or not they had fulfiled them.

As self-assessment almost inevitably elicited a desire for corrective adaptation, the trust placed in those involved (teachers or pupils) provided an utterly natural and lasting driving force for academic progress.

5. WORKING GROUPS: SYNOPSIS OF DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Work concerning the Final Report

Conclusions, comments and proposals of the eight working groups of the Project Group's Final Report, presented by Prof. Maurice GALTON, Director, School of Education, University of Leicester.

5.1.1 In presenting a summary of the conclusions reached in the various working groups I have tried to bring together the main themes and issues that dominated our discussions. I have not identified specific proposals for changes of wording, although these have been noted by the individual rapporteurs and will be taken back to the Project Group tomorrow.

Before presenting this summary it may be useful to draw attention to the main ideas which guided the Project Group's thinking when drawing up the report. We wished to see develop within the educational system a "climate" which created satisfying social relationships between various participants (teachers and pupils, teachers and other teachers etc) which in the words of the contact school report gives people the confidence "to do new things and not only to repeat what other generations have done". Such people need to be independent thinkers, able to "verify things and not accept everything they are offered". This exercise of individual autonomy needs to take place

within a co-operative framework where other people's views receive equal respect. Thus the emphasis in the report is on the social conditions of learning which allow children and adults to participate fully in various educational processes without suffering a loss of self-esteem or being embarassed by failure. We believe that only within such a climate can innovation take place successfully.

It is against this background that some of the concerns expressed by the members of the working groups should be viewed. For example reservations were expressed about the lack of specific reference to Human Rights education and to intercultural education within the recommendations concerning the curriculum. While acknowledging a need to expand notions of democracy to include such ideas as justice and solidarity and to tackle the problem of mother-tongue language acquisition within a multicultural framework, it should be recognised that the "learning climate" suggested by the Project Group is one where respect for minority rights and the concern for justice is fully integrated within the philosophy which underpins the project. On both matters, human rights and education for a multicultural society, it is possible to draw on existing CDCC documentation.

Given the philosophy of the report - Professor Cardinet correctly analysed its theoretical perspective as "interactionist" with the emphasis on "negotiated" meanings - it follows that in the report and its conclusions attention should be given to ways in which our knowledge of child development helps us to understand better why some children (and adults) are unable to participate successfully in this interaction process. Professor Montagner drew our attention to this problem and the need for those with expert knowledge (both medical and psychological) to support teachers in their central role as outlined in section 4.1.2 of the report. Indeed the value of bringing such experts into schools where they can study successful learning as well as dealing with failure in a clinical setting cannot be over-emphasised.

5.1.2 Within the report concern was also expressed over the possible interpretation of the proposal for equality of attainment through differentiated teaching (section 2.2.2.1). Some participants saw a danger that this might be perceived as a call for the return of streaming according to ability instead of a reaffirmation of the "mastery" principle of learning where children are required to reach levels of performance based upon agreed criteria but at their own pace. It was felt in the report there was an unresolved ambiguity about the degree to which this principle of differentiation could be reconciled with the need for a common curriculum framework (or core).

In Chapter 3, dealing with innovation there were those who thought that the definition (3.1.1) should concern itself not only with the adaption of the school system to a whole set of demands posed by society but should also take account of progress in our knowledge of human development. Some felt greater emphasis should be given to the pace of innovation, that it should not be done too quickly in ways that might create hostility on the part of teachers and parents. Indeed the role of parents and of pupils in the innovation process was not, in the opinion of some participants, discussed in sufficient detail. Others felt that the rationale of the typology for styles of innovation was not clear and that the links between these styles and Professor Vandenberghe's innovation policies had not been worked out in sufficient detail.

Within this innovation chapter it was felt that there were several omissions. No reference was made to the role of the Inspector/Adviser in promoting change within the educational system. In groups where this issue was discussed no firm conclusions were reached but clearly this is a matter which must be raised within the Project Group for further consideration.

On the new role of the teacher (a matter also discussed in section 2.3) it was felt that problems of recruitment and the need to raise the quality of entrants had been ignored. In many countries teaching was still a relatively "low status" profession. Other points to emerge during the discussions concerned the need to take into account the work of non-governmental organisations, the need to make specific reference to the "nuclear" family in paragraph (ii) section 1.1.5, and the importance of drawing attention to the negative aspects of the influence exerted by the media. Some participants also argued that insufficient attention had been paid to the effects of "informal" influences, which occurred outside school.

5.1.3 Turning to consideration of the report's conclusions and recommendations (Chapter 4), the following suggestions were made.

1. Make some statement about the competitive effects of schooling on young children. Put greater emphasis on the need for schools to react dynamically to the rapidly changing needs of society: the need at the same time for schools to sustain the values from which our European culture has derived (section 4.1.1).

2. Emphasise the need for external support of experts to help teachers fulfill their enlarged and demanding role. Pay greater attention to the environmental conditions, in terms of better use of space and time, which allows the necessary exchanges to take place between teachers and pupils (section 4.1.2).

3. Extend the aims of primary education (section 4.2.1) to include reference to aesthetic and spiritual needs of children. Broaden the concept of "education for democracy" to incorporate human rights. Stress the importance for pupils to understand the need to protect the environment for future generations.

4. Clarify the notion of "genuine" differentiation in terms of "mastery" learning and reconcile this approach with the need for a curriculum framework. Emphasise the positive benefits to all pupils of integration (section 4.2.2.1).

5. Stress the continuity of teaching practices between primary and secondary schooling refers specifically to the transitional stage between the two phases. Be more specific about the role of the pre-primary school: its function is not simply to socialise children for the primary school (section 4.2.2.3).

6. Explain clearly that the attention given to mathematics, science and technology, at the expense of language reflects the choice of workshops and a feeling that less was known about research and development in these areas. Include some statement on language acquisition, particularly in relation to problems of mother tongue teaching in a multicultural context. Give some consideration to aesthetic and moral education as well as to the

role of play in the early years. Place the emphasis on the child and stress "constructivist" approaches to learning. Introduce the notion of links between culture and science and technology (section 4.2.3.3). Note that the problem of "knowledge explosion" should acknowledge the gap between the availability of information outside and inside schools and examine ways of using technology to reduce this discrepancy (section 4.2.3.4). Reorder curriculum areas to give greater importance to the environment introducing the idea of protecting the natural environment as well as the cultural heritage. Remove the multicultural context (section 4.2.3.7) from this section and give to it a separate section (4.2.1).

7. Attempt to define successful innovation in more detail and indicate how it might be evaluated (section 4.2.4.1).

8. Stress that in times of severe budgetary control redeployment of existing resources will often be necessary whenever innovation takes place. At the same time, point out that it would seem unrealistic to start on an innovation programme without providing some additional resourcing. Experience from the contact schools indicates such help, particularly where it makes possible time for critical reflection, is fully justified by increased commitment (section 4.2.4.2).

9. Provide all head teachers with a course of training before they take up their first appointment (section 4.2.5.2). Set out more clearly the idea of the "partnership" with parents: whether it extends to decision-making on the aspects of the school's policy and administration (section 4.2.5.3).

10. Review the recommendations on teacher training to accord more closely with the views expressed in chapter 3 involving the links between initial and in-service education. Pay greater attention in initial training about the extended "professional" role of teachers in their dealings with parents. Specify more clearly the part to be played by University and College tutors in this process. Emphasise the need to build into the in-service programmes adequate time for critical reflection and adequate reward for success (section 4.2.5.5).

11. Include a section on the role of the Inspector/Adviser in the development of teachers and discuss in concrete terms how the links between the different levels (local/central authority etc) could operate to promote innovation.

12. Consider possible omissions concerning the problems of certain groups of pupils (drop-outs, school refusals etc).

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This then completes the summary of the main suggestions which were offered by the working groups. The members of the Project Group, and in particular the drafting group, thank you for your positive contribution and assure you that all points will receive serious consideration in their future deliberations.

5.1.4 WORKING GROUPS

- DISCUSSION OF THE FINAL REPORT (EXCEPT for Chapter 4 - Conclusions and Recommendations)

  4 Groups - Rapporteurs:
  1. Prof. M GALTON (United Kingdom)
  2. Prof. W WOLF (Austria)
  3. Mr G BAERT (Belgium)
  4. Mrs M THURLER (Switzerland)

- DISCUSSION OF THE CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS (CHAPTER 4 OF THE FINAL REPORT)

  4 Groups -

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     - Rapporteur: Mrs S JÖNSDÖTTIR (Iceland)

  2. - Chairman: Mr P HONETH (Sweden)
     - Rapporteur: Mr D HOLLINGSWORTH (United Kingdom)

  3. - Chairman: Prof. J -P OESTREICHER (Luxembourg)
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  4. - Chairman: Mr G H van den HOVEN (Netherlands)
     - Rapporteur: Mrs M H VALENTE-ROSA (Portugal)

5.2 Work concerning dissemination of findings and the follow-up

Conclusions, comments and proposals of the four working groups on the dissemination of the Project results and the follow-up presented by Mr Don HOLLINGSWORTH, HMI, Department of Education and Science, London

5.2.1 General response

5.2.1.1 The proposals of the groups leave no shadow of doubt that the whole Conference places great emphasis on the importance of keeping alive the network of contacts which have been established by Project No. 8. Many ways of doing this are suggested in what follows. Overall it is recognised that we should all - the national delegates, the representatives of the non-governmental bodies, the Council of Europe - all play our part in maintaining the contacts to facilitate an exchange of information and so help to improve education at the primary phase.

5.2.1.2 At this level of response it is strongly recommended that the CDCC should maintain interest and continue to give attention to the education of children of the years 5-12. Furthermore it is suggested that a greater share of the CDCC's budget should be allocated to research relating to the primary field of education.

5.2.2 Proposals for dissemination of the Project's findings

5.2.2.1 In respect of the report itself a summary should be prepared aimed specifically for Ministers.

5.2.2.2 It is suggested that each member State should take action to promote the findings of the Project by organising workshops, seminars, and symposia. Already a great deal of action is beginning and more is planned. The recommendation of the Conference is that the seminars should to some extent have an international dimension in the presence of those attending.

Interesting examples of plans and preparations are:

- The Netherlands propose to hold a Conference in 1988 when they will evaluate their re-organisation to Basic Schools and to do this in the context of the findings of the Project. They are planning to have a broad representation from other countries at this Conference.

- Switzerland is planning a seminar from 22 to 26 August 1988 with the dual purpose of disseminating the findings of the Project and discussing some recent Swiss educational initiatives. A number of delegates from other nations will be invited.

- The Nordic nations will organise a joint Conference relating to the Project and intend to publish a special report.

- Many interesting national proposals for seminars were mentioned by other delegations, namely: French-speaking Belgium, Cyprus (7-9 March 1988), Denmark, Finland (11-15 April 1988), Iceland (12 and 13 May 1988), Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Portugal.

5.2.2.3 Other aspects of dissemination which should be given attention:

Each member State should do all possible to present the findings of the Project to:

- the radio/television/the press

- meetings of teachers, parents and children.

5.2.2.4 The Council of Europe should also consider encouraging the production of television films about the further development of the proposals of the project, as well as directly informing the media.

5.2.2.5 Further proposals relating to the work of the Council of Europe:

- audiovisual materials should be circulated;
- a catalogue of available materials relating to Project No. 8 should be distributed and a newsletter sent out twice a year;
- prepare micro-file data records relating to innovations;
- contribute to the organising of meetings relating to the Project specifically for the southern group of member States;
- organise an international seminar in the summer following publication of the Project's report;
- create a network of 20 schools as a pilot scheme to encourage and develop a number of the proposals of the Project.

5.2.2.6 Specifically relating to finance it is suggested that the Council of Europe should consider:

- covering travel costs when representatives of the Project are invited to contribute to an international seminar;

- financing the provision of simultaneous interpretation at selected meetings;

- contributing to the production of short summary reports in languages other than French and English.

5.2.3 Further action: Proposals for future projects

It was the agreed view that a number of carefully focussed projects might effectively follow Project No. 8.

5.2.3.1 Teacher training

Future initiatives relating to teacher training could be co-ordinated with the follow-up to the 15th Session of the Standing Conference of European Ministers of Education (Helsinki, 5-7 May 1987).

The Council of Europe might mount a study to clarify the implications of the recommendations of Project No. 8 for the initial and in-service training of teachers, giving emphasis to the methodology of the training. Particular attention should be given to the interaction of the initial and in-service provisions, and also to the selection and recruitment of teachers.

5.2.3.2 Management of learning

The proposal was for a study of management issues affecting the work of the teacher and the headteacher - giving attention to leadership, co-operation, contact with parents, awareness of new trends, financial management etc.

5.2.3.3 Children's development and learning

Giving attention to all aspects of development including moral, social, and religious aspects, knowledge of their bio-rhythms and of the difficulties many children face in our fast changing world.

5.2.3.4 The factors of effective innovation

A study of the factors which can be influenced by the school, in collaboration with the parents, and the variables which are crucial for the success of innovation at the school level.

5.2.3.5 Studies of aspects of the curriculum

It was suggested that particular attention should now be given to:

- attention given within curricula to the topic of protecting the environment;

- science education;

- moral/social/religious/personal education having proper regard for intercultural and human rights education.

5.2.4 Finally dissemination through the influence of all the members of the Conference in their particular spheres was recognised and declared of crucial importance.

5.2.5 WORKING GROUPS

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3. - Chairman: Prof. J -P OESTREICHER (Luxembourg)
   - Rapporteur: Mr G MAVROIDIS (Greece)

4. - Chairman: Mr G H van den HOVEN (Netherlands)
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OCDE - Organisation de Coopération et de Développement Economique
OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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CEE - Commission des Communautés Européennes
EEC - Commission of the European Communities

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AELE - Association Européenne de Libre Echange
EFTA - European Free Trade Association

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OEI - Organisation des Etats Ibéro-Américains pour l'Education, la Science et la Culture
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A P P E N D I X II

LIST OF CASE STUDIES

COUNTRY	SUBJECT	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF AUTHOR
France	"The use of microcomputers in primary schools in Bar-le-Duc"	Luxembourg
Greece	"The improvement of creative and aesthetic skills of children through art and drama in the city of Athens"	Norway
Iceland	"Co-ordinated school-work in Iceland"	United Kingdom
United Kingdom	"The use of microcomputers in the primary schools of the city of Leeds"	Netherlands
Austria	"Spontaneous and individual learning in free choice periods (Montessori) in Salzburg"	United Kingdom
France	"Relations between school establishments and relations between the school and its social environment - ZEP (Priority eduction area)"	Spain
Italy	"Teaching through mass media for the acquisition of basic language skills"	Belgium
Norway	"Parent-school relationship at the primary level of the basic school in Norway"	Austria
Belgium	"School-based review as an introduction strategy for the new-style primary education (VLO) project in Belgium	Netherlands
Finland	"Delegation of decision making from state level to local authorities"	Iceland
France	"Assistance to isolated schools in mountain regions of France (EMALA)"	Italy
France	"School timetable reform in France"	Belgium

Belgium	"Modified timetable arrangements in French-speaking Belgium"	France
Netherlands	"School development in practice"	Switzerland

ANNEXE / APPENDIX III.

LISTE DES ECOLES DE CONTACT
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APPENDIX IV

External assessment and self-assessment in the school education system

Jean CARDINET, IRDP, Neuchâtel

1. What this text sets out to do

The term «assessment» evaluation was little used in French until the middle of this century, but it was re-imported from America some ten years ago and is now invading educational science and even winning through in popular usage.

Management concerns are in fact becoming universal, and management of the educational system is generating a steadily increasing volume of research and publications. Assessment is, however, the essential stage in management: it lies at the heart of the regulating process built into a system which, as everyone knows, involves investigating what is actually happening (observation), comparing it with objectives (assessment proper) and finally taking corrective (remedial) action.

At the general level of systems analysis, assessment seems a straightforward process. In fact, it deals with widely varying problems, depending on whether it is concerned with summarising formative or predictive factors (Cardinet, 1977), or with the functioning of the pupil, the school or the school system as a whole.

The final report on the Project on «Innovation in primary education» suggests a third, essential distinction between different types of assessment: external assessment, internal assessment and negotiated assessment, and it would seem important to clarify both their theoretical (epistemological) and practical (institutional) implications. In fact, while the framework within which a person thinks undoubtedly determines to a very large extent the assessment and management procedures which he finds himself applying, the choice of this framework is itself fairly arbitrary. It is important to bear this fact in mind, if one is not to find oneself involuntarily confined within a particular model.

The following pages try to describe and justify these three major conceptions of assessment, which have received equal attention in scientific publications in the last twenty years. They are nonetheless presented in a definite order. The purpose of the argument is to show that a synthesis is possible between the two first approaches to assessment (external and internal) and between the two antithetical conceptions of management (centralised and decentralised). This kind of synthesis is, of course, the distinctive feature of the third epistemological conception, the so-called «interactive» model, which works on the assumption that objective knowledge can be reached by comparing subjective standpoints, and therefore suggests that interaction of the various protagonists within an organisation facilitates the functioning of the whole.

The final section of this text will show that the new ideas and original proposals contained in the final report are largely connected with this third current of thought, and particularly with the social psychology of education. In presenting their recommendations, the rapporteurs have been more systematic than a superficial reading would

suggest: they take the view that the same concept of assessment, and thus of management, can profitably be applied on all levels of the school system. The idea of interaction thus stands as a general principle, which the Council for Cultural Co-operation can reasonably suggest as a unifying theme to educational policy-makers in all the countries of Europe.

2. External assessment and systemic management

2.1 The natural sciences model

The introduction of scientific methods of enquiry into education at the beginning of this century coincided with the birth of sociology and experimental psychology. Almost inevitably, the same reference framework was adopted by all these young sciences, which set out to discover general laws, taking the natural sciences as their model.

The first explanations offered in educational science were thus of the causal type. By monitoring all the factors involved in the learning process and then intentionally modifying individual variables, the researcher can pin-point the relationships which he is investigating, linking effects to their causes. In this way, by using modifiable variables, he can uncover the laws which explain the educational process and which provide a basis for the development of teaching techniques.

Scientific management of the school seems possible, once adequate technical means are available: educational engineering can take over, and value judgments be ignored, as soon as the policy-making authorities have taken an initial decision regarding the aims of the process.

At the same time, genuine causal relationships or, if one prefers, objective scientific facts, are still hard to determine, and the naive theories of teachers must be rigorously controlled to make this possible. Until the truth has been revealed, widely varying views concerning reality are the main obstacle to any technological management scheme. Subjectivity must thus be banished and everything be measured, this being the first step towards that accuracy on which correct prediction depends. The prime concern is objectivity.

Assessment therefore tends to focus on end-products, which are stable and thus easier to measure. Since it is results which count, and not intentions or reasons, which too often serve as specious justifications, the observers are content to select a few variables as criteria and describe the levels achieved with reference to them, reducing personal interpretation to a minimum.

Essentially, assessment thus remains comparative, and comes down to a monitoring of the result observed by comparison with that expected (a multi-dimensional reality being reduced to a simple average with the help of a weighting coefficient vector). Depending on the discrepancy between the observed mean and the expected threshold, corrective decisions, can be taken more or less automatically, once an appropriate strategy has been worked out.

2.2 Examples of external assessment

- Class management

Assessment of the results achieved by each pupil with reference to the target is a natural concomitant of this model. The teacher indicates in advance the problems which his class is expected to learn how to solve, and checks at the end to see if each pupil has done so. In this case, school assessment serves the same function as quality control at the various stages of industrial production. When the aim has not been achieved, extra training must be provided.

The researchers propose a series of precautions to keep objective. Since the selection of examination questions is the chief arbitrary element, questions are drawn at random from a bank of items embracing all the possibilities (Schoemaker, 1973). Statistical analysis of the variability between items can then be used to determine the size of the observation sample needed, depending on the margin of error which can be accepted around the success threshold (Cardinet and Tourneur, 1985). Formalised procedures are also used to determine this threshold. In the event of failure, the activities which each unsuccessful pupil should pursue are selected in advance, depending on the nature of his difficulties (Bloom, Hastings and Madaus, 1971). In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the entire process of individual, objective-related assessment can be turned over to a computer (Nitko and Tse-chi-Hsu, 1984).

- School management

The systemic conception at once suggests how the upper level of the system - the school - can itself be monitored. This can be done by defining a sufficient number of result indicators (Carr-Hill and Magnussen, 1973) to give the person in charge a kind of control panel, which shows him where the system is malfunctioning and allows him to follow the impact of corrective measures (figures for absenteeism, punishment, use of the library, success in national examinations, repeating of years, etc).

To keep these data objective, precautions are needed to pre-empt reactions to the data: when the annual repeat figures become known, for example, teachers tend to modify their own level of severity more than the level of their classes. Points of comparison are also needed for interpretation of these «ratios», whose significance is essentially relative.

- System management

A curriculum can be assessed in the same way by comparing results with targets. This was the line followed by Tyler (1949) in developing a systematic methodology which served as a basis, or point of reference, for all subsequent assessment studies.

Tyler proposed the drawing-up of a list of objectives, ranging in order of importance from general aims to specific skills, and based on realistic expectations. This list was then published and served as a reference both for teaching practice and for the devising of measuring instruments. Once these monitoring devices had been applied and analysed, conclusions could be drawn regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum. Recommendations for change were then made to those responsible for the system.

Subsequent refinement of this approach has made it possible to extend the target areas measured. Indicators can in fact be found both for the affective and psycho-motor aims of schooling and for the general skills which education is supposed to develop (Metfessel and Michael, 1967).

Tyler insisted, however, that assessment must always be based on the ultimate aim of the educational system, ie on the behaviour of the learners themselves.

2.3 Discussion of external assessment

No-one would deny that the experimental approach is useful or that it has been successfully applied to education. What can be questioned, however, is the dogmatic assertion that this approach is the only valid way of obtaining knowledge. It is easy to show that this light, too, itself determines the size and location of the shadows which it casts.

- The illusion of simplicity

On all the levels examined, it would be a mistake to believe that the measurements taken actually convey the essential features of the thing measured. The fact that a pupil can answer examination questions, for example, has only tenuous links with other criteria which are quite as important - such as his ability to draw spontaneously on the same knowledge in an out-of-school situation.

On another level, it is not enough to recognise that some of a curriculum's objectives have not been attained: the champions of active learning, for example, have always argued that their methods' indirect effects on the motivation and learning strategies of pupils must also be measured, in other words, that the long-term benefits must be assessed, before a final verdict can be reached. But how can short- and long-term criteria be considered simultaneously if they are contradictory? The obvious complexity of the problems is compounded, however, by obstacles of a still more fundamental sort.

- The illusion of general validity

It would be hard to find a researcher in the social sciences who would nowadays claim to state laws which were universally valid for all cultures. The passing of time also relativises theories, whose life-span is scarcely that of a generation. Techniques are developing even more rapidly. The compilation of data-banks, for instance, is complicated by the fact that the content and forms of enquiry are changing at the same pace as curricula and teaching methods. Finally, experimental research casts doubt on the validity of its own conclusions by showing that a specific approach, which works for one kind of pupil, will not work for another, and that these interactions ramify interminably for each new variable studied (Cronbach, 1985).

- The illusion of objectivity

The very idea that the «truth» can be known about a pupil or an accurate verdict reached on examinees becomes dubious once it is realised that reformulating the questions is enough to turn success into failure or acceptance into refusal (Cardinet, 1986). The problem can, of course, be sidestepped by fixing the form of the question (using standardised tests or written questionnaires) but this means that the scope (the general validity)

of the outcome is almost entirely sacrificed. Finally, the fact that most of the measurements used in educational experiments themselves provoke reactions casts doubt on the objectivity of the findings: a control group is never neutral, and the mere fact of being chosen to take part in an experiment positively affects the attitudes of the persons involved. Conversely, most people dislike having simply to apply methods previously tried out and perfected by others. The industrial product, developed in the laboratory and then generalised outside, will not serve as a model for education.

- The necessity of «understanding»

Most researchers, in all the social sciences, now take the view that it is dangerous to rely on statistical regularity which is purely empirical, unless one can account for the emergent pattern in terms of subjective reactions to an environment, or as Boudon and Bourricaud (1986) put it, turn it into a «complex of comprehensible actions». This means that no level of the school system can be managed from the outside, with sole reference to objective indicators. The essential first step is to achieve an inside view.

3. Internal assessment and autonomous management

3.1 The human sciences model

The above discussion shows that one must oneself be a part of the social context that one sets out to influence if one is to be able to identify with the protagonists, and thus understand and anticipate their reactions. The corresponding framework of thought is that of ethnology, anthropology, history - in other words, that of the human sciences, which «comprehend», rather than the other sciences, which generalise.

To explain by comprehending is to look for «reasons», and no longer for «causes». Events are no longer explained in terms of an outside determinism, operating through inescapable laws, but in terms of the intentional actions of the participants. These actions can themselves be explained with reference to subjective perceptions, values and intentions, ultimately based on meaning systems.

From this standpoint, to manage education is to propose a policy which makes all the separate educational initiatives cohere and converge towards common objectives.

Harmony still has to be established, however, since pupils, teachers and parents necessarily have divergent interests. Each group's viewpoint may in itself be coherent, and yet dictate a choice of priorities which differs from those of the others. The manager's prime concern is thus to find a way of getting these forces to combine by connecting various visions of reality. In fact, he is obliged to deal with different realities, to accept the views of each group and allow for them in his decisions. Obtaining objective information thus has no meaning for him. It is the relevance of the information which counts, in other words, the extent to which it helps to explain why a particular group has adopted a particular attitude. Knowing the protagonists' intentions is the best basis for accurate prediction. The first concern must be to understand.

Assessment will therefore focus on the perceptions of the parties involved, which account for their attitudes and choices. This implies the collection of qualitative data, and particularly interviews and content analysis, for the purpose of understanding each subjective viewpoint correctly and abstracting its significance through inference, or even, on occasion, interpretation (in the psycho-analytical sense of the term). To interpret a result, however, it is usually necessary to know what has produced it, what process has culminated in the situation under review. Observation will thus focus also on the links between the actions and reactions of the parties concerned.

This means that assessment remains, above all, descriptive, being content to analyse the viewpoints of the various partners, but attempting to do so clinically, ie relating every item of information to the others.

Decision-making is thus a matter of judgment, with arguments being weighed minutely against one another, rather in the manner of a court of law.

3.2 Examples of internal assessment

- Class management

Self-assessment is little used in primary schools, because pupils need some time to get used to it (Reymond, 1984). It is by no means impossible, however, as the experiments carried out as part of the SIPRI project in Switzerland (Weiss, 1982) have shown.

If it is now thought essential that children in primary school should learn to work on their own, because their whole subsequent development depends on mastering effective learning strategies, then the logical conclusion must be drawn: it is quite as essential to prepare the child to assess his own performance; otherwise, the result will be a conflictual situation, in which he is assessed on objectives which are not his own. In activities geared to self-expression, teachers already try to take account of who the child is aiming at, of his purpose in communicating. Respecting his objectives is even more important in physical or arts education, or in the new subject areas which are now coming into schools, if he is to connect classroom activity with his own experience. This, according to Rogers (1972), is one of the essential conditions of meaningful learning.

Since it can no longer refer to objectives fixed by the teacher, assessment follows a more general line, and the pupil himself can take charge of it: analysis of his activity (how did he set about achieving his aim?); analysis of the initial aim (how can it be reformulated in the light of experience?). This leads to non-directive assessement, in which all the value judgments are supplied by the person being assessed.

- School management

Self-analysis by schools has been the subject of numerous experiments in recent years, and these are well summarised by Hopkins (1985). Self-analysis means in this instance that a school (ie at least its teachers as a group) tries to make a diagnosis of its own way of operating, with a view, of course, to improving it. The procedure adopted is peculiar to each school. One of the case studies in the Final Report (p. 127) is

concerned with self-assessment by Flemish primary schools: there is thus no point in elaborating this example here.

As in the case of class self-assessment, the important thing here is to initiate a dynamic process of improvement, and not to collect objective data. Teachers who become aware of certain difficulties formulate working hypotheses concerning their origin. The data which they collect are of maximum relevance, since they serve to answer their own questions. This leaves them prepared to search actively for solutions, and these solutions will also have maximum significance for them, because that signficance derives from their own viewpoint.

- System management

A somewhat similar pattern of self-assessment and answers specifically geared to the questions asked by school staff recurs in the approach adopted by Stake (1975) to the assessment of innovations, an approach which may be described as «client-centred» (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield, 1985).

In every organisation, those at the top need information on the social context in which they have to take decisions. The researcher's role, in Stake's view, is to supply this information, thus paving the way for the internal assessment involved in all management.

The researcher accordingly starts by investigating the various subjective concerns which may have led to his being called in. This leads him to question the various groups involved, with a view to pin-pointing their problems and the questions which they ask themselves. This inventory shows him what data are needed and allows him to devise a survey plan, covering the antecedents, implementation and results of innovation, so that the various items of information can be interpreted with reference to one another.

Data analysis is then used to provide a picture of the situation which is as qualitative and as detailed as possible (Parlett, 1974); this includes a verification phase (involving various cross-checks) and a data formatting phase (with data adapted to the various groups concerned and the questions which they ask themselves).

When quantitative data are required, eg concerning the success-rate for attainment of a given educational goal, the assessor must obtain them, but Stake, unlike Tyler, does not regard output as the ultimate criterion. Only those in charge can say what they regard as important: they are the ones who make the assessment.

3.3 Discussion of internal assessment

Self-assessment is obviously an effective way of countering the excesses of positivism and is truer to subjective perceptions and values. It facilitates adjustment to local peculiarities and to the various attitudes which teachers encounter in a pluralist society. But it also has definite dangers.

- Dangers for pupils

To the extent that competition is still the rule throughout much of the school system, it may be unwise to ignore this factor completely in the classroom: teachers and pupils must be able to measure themselves against external «standards», and it is no bad thing that the subjective certainties of both should sometimes be contradicted by outside data.

- Dangers for schools

Not all teachers are prepared to change their methods, and the proposed reappraisal may provoke conflict and irrational defence reactions; the effects are rendered still harder to predict by the fact that the teachers concerned are not usually trained to implement innovations, and largely lack guiding models.

- Dangers for the school system

Present-day societies force their school systems to make rapid adjustments, whereas those concerned need time to identify the problems. Self-assessment could also be used by teachers and parents to maintain the status quo. The fragmentation of initiatives can impede major projects and even lead to projects which conflict (concentrating, for example, on underprivileged groups or elites). Sufficient unity of educational practice is ultimately necessary both for pupils, to ensure continuity of their schooling, and for teachers, to whom the most promising approaches must be recommended.

Continued account must be taken of subjective viewpoints and of the human values which motivate all the protagonists within the school system, but care must also be taken to avoid mere fragmented individualism, and ways found of bringing viewpoints closer together, so that the various initiatives can be made to converge.

4. Negotiated assessment and interactive management

4.1 The comprehensive sciences model

The best approach to the explanation of phenomena has been a subject of debate in the social sciences from the outset, but a conclusion now seems to be emerging - if one agrees with Boudon (1979) that most social science researchers today accept the position of Max Weber and Kurt Lewin, rather than that of Durkheim or the phenomenologists.

To explain a phenomenon is to account for it in terms of something else. Although it would seem difficult to identify the laws which determine the behaviour of individuals, even when that behaviour is conscious, and although the historical explanation is flawed by its contingent character, since no event ever recurs identically, it is still possible to identify recurring structures in the flow of history. What is involved here is laws of a new kind, but laws whose determinism is based on the intentional actions of participants, which can therefore be accounted for in terms of subjective signficance. As an example of this, Boudon and Bourrichaud (1986) refer to Hirschman's «exile strategy», ie the individual's tendency to opt for a personal solution to his problems, as long as he discerns

a way out, instead of fighting for a general solution, which involves long-term collective action. This «structural pattern» may explain the absence of a revolutionary movement in the United States, as well as the development of a network of private schools in European countries with centralised school systems. This model thus has general validity, and this is what makes it scientific. At the same time, it is based on understanding the situation of every individual, and not on analysing objective variables. It also implies a convergence of personal perceptions, explaining the emergence of collective behaviour patterns.

Within this framework of thought, management of the school system depends on an initial effort to understand the position of all the parties, to identify with others in a way which makes their individual viewpoints seem justified, but also on subsequent negotiation to bring these various perceptions into convergence and ultimately generate a common behaviour pattern.

The main objective of investigation thus remains, as in the phenomenological approach, the perceptions of the protagonists. Through these various viewpoints, however, certain permanent structures are examined. These structures may be problem-solving strategies, if the work of pupils is being assessed, effective strategies for social change, if action at school level is projected, or the underlying educational policies, if an overall curriculum is being assessed.

In this instance, assessment necessarily has multiple points of reference, since it takes the combined reference points of the individual protagonists as its framework. Reality is thus defined as the sum-total of objective data from the first approach and subjective perceptions from the second. The best way of exploring this reality is to compare as many viewpoints as possible and, for this purpose, to generate interaction between the protagonists.

Seen from this angle, decision-making is always political, ie it presupposes negotiation both of the reference points to be taken into account and of the judgment strategies to be applied to them.

4.2 Examples of negotiated assessment

- Class management

Applying Bonniol's theories (1986), a number of teachers in France have tried to get their pupils to manage the learning process themselves. For this purpose, they have devised an approach in which pupils learn to assess themselves under the guidance of the teacher, who first tells them what the objectives are, what criteria are relevant and what indicators can be used to determine whether or not performance is satisfactory (Nunziati, 1984).

In practical terms, Vial (1987) shows how a «study chart» can be prepared with the class by analysing corrected work for the purpose of pin-pointing what is expected of the pupil and the errors which he should

avoid. Having thus internalised the assessment standard, each pupil then draws up his own «learning plan», on which his successive «work contracts» with the teacher are based. New requirements can then be added if necessary; exercises can be geared to the operations which cause him most difficulty, while he himself seeks out additional material on aspects which he feels he has not mastered.

Teacher-pupil discussion leads to the comparison of subject-logic and learner-logic and, when the right time comes, to introduction of the metalanguage needed for discussion of the operations which are to be carried out. This shared exploration process makes it possible to make any changes needed in the collective study chart and individual learning plans, which are thus «negotiated» to the extent that they derive from multiple interaction, in which the teacher finds out what his pupils can do and where they have problems, and the pupil tries to see what is expected of him and how he can attain it.

The many French studies which, like the above, develop the learning contract theory propounded by Brousseau (1981) show how useful the approach based on the psycho-sociology of perceptions is. Specifically, they show the educational significance of «working on perceptions» the role of initial «guidance structures» and the factors on which constructive «cognitive conflict» (eg Giordan, 1983, for the sciences, Schubauer-Léoni, 1986, for mathematics). Moreover, the research done on the social psychology of education (Perret-Clermont, 1979; Mugny, 1985) indirectly casts doubt on current school assessment by showing that it is interactions in an examination situation, and not individual pupils, which are measured.

- School management

Huberman and Miles (1986) give a good picture of the main features of the third approach when applied to assessment of a school. The first (technological) approach expects teachers to accept without demur any new curriculum whose superiority has been scientifically demonstrated: any other attitude is condemned as irrational, and even irresponsible. The second (historical) approach recognises the countless factors which impede or facilitate change, such as the part played by a particular person or element in a particular setting. The manager in this case is less naive than the technocrat in the first, but he still has only his own good sense to rely on. The research done by these two authors highlights management styles which, while being «comprehensible» from the inside, display sufficient regularity in present-day European society to provide a basis for innovative strategies.

Studying a whole series of experimental changes in schools, Huberman and Miles show that the technical quality of the proposed improvement is far from being the main reason for its acceptance by teachers. More personal reasons, such as the teacher's desire for novelty, wish to extend his range of skills or hope of improving his working conditions, etc, are almost as important. Above all, pressure from headteachers was given, in 62% of cases, as the main reason for the change.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the most fruitful management style combines firmness and persistance with effective support (particularly by relaxing other institutional constraints which make it hard to carry the scheme through, providing backing for teamwork, adjusting timetables etc).

In the absence of pressure from above, however, teachers are content to select from the proposed innovation a few techniques which are compatible with their personal approach, which thus remains unchanged. Simple administrative pressure, for its part, runs into passive resistance on the part of the teaching body.

The conclusion here is clear and logical: headteachers, like teachers, judge the proposed innovation with reference to all their concerns, and not simply on its educational merits. This means that change is acceptable only if each of its drawbacks is offset for everyone by some other advantage. Negotiation is inevitable, and is also the only way of progressing, since any attempt by one partner to dominate the others merely ends by paralysing the whole structure.

On the non-zero target co-operating game model, it is by confronting their individual demands, while remaining determined to advance together, that the parties involved in innovation must assess the present situation and manage its reform.

- System management

The change of scale which occurs when one moves to the school system as a whole makes it hard to transpose the above interactive model, since face-to-face relationships are no longer possible. Some forms of organisation, however, allow the authority to retain its galvanising and facilitating function, on the one hand, while allowing local adjustments to be negotiated, on the other.

The case-study relating to the innovational function of Education Centres in the Netherlands (Final Report, p. 144) would seem a good example of a half-way structure, capable both of disseminating a national policy and supporting its negotiation in individual schools. Similarly, the research of the INRP in France (INRP, 1987), which brings together groups of schools interested in trying out particular educational projects, plays an equally important role in disseminating innovation and in providing information on the school system itself (Hugon and Seibel, to be published shortly).

What typifies these innovation structures is the confrontation and comparison of two projects. At the beginning, as in the second model, schools volunteer to analyse their practice systematically for the purpose of improving it; resource persons are needed here to provide them with theoretical and instrumental support. The difference from straightforward self-analysis by an autonomous group tries, however, in the fact that the local project here encounters a national project with clear priorities, themselves rooted in a considered educational policy. The direction to be followed is thus defined in general terms, and its local implementation which remains to be discussed in individual cases.

Individual schools are left, however, with a considerable margin of autonomy, and the influence which they can bring to bear on the definition of projects may also be very substantial (see, for example, Langouet, 1985). The holding of national seminars for all the schools working on the same project provides an opportunity for face-to-face discussion and the reaching of negotiated conclusions, not only between the initiators of the project

and teachers, but also between the schools involved themselves. Certain forms of meta-analysis then become possible (Cardinet, 1985), «comprehensively» highlighting the general conditions for success of the scheme, and thus improving the means of managing the system as a whole.

4.3 Discussion of negotiated assessment

The third - interactive - framework of thought is not really incompatible with the two earlier ones. It retains their main values - the second model's desire that the data obtained should be meaningful for the protagonists and relevant to the decisions which they have to take, and also the first model's concern that they should tend towards objectivity - by comparing all the subjective elements in the reference communities, where a measure of consensus emerges. (This is the only possible operational criterion of a scientific approach).

5. Rereading of Final Report

The thinkers who describe the methods followed by researchers and explain their epistemological assumptions do not claim to judge the scientific value of the work which they are analysing: this is a job for the scientific community. Still less can there be any question of presenting one approach as being more correct than another: all models are equally legitimate.

On the other hand, where educational applications are concerned, there is no reason why a particular framework of thought should not prove more fruitful than others at a particular moment. This is the only sense in which judgment can be passed on current trends in educational science and in which one can say that the above discussion suggests that the «interactive» model is more promising for educational innovation.

Since they are refering to the same sources, it is not surprising that the experts in Project Group No. 8 should have interpreted all the research and experiments which they analyse in the same way as ourselves. However, it is still worth highlighting this common framework of thought, since it is undoubtedly one of the distinctive features of contemporary European culture, setting it apart, for example, from American culture. It also provides a way of rereading the Final Report in summary terms, for the purpose of identifying the fundamental positions which it embodies.

5.1 The new deal

The authors refer, as soon as they begin to speak of the renewal of our scientific knowledge (in section 1.2.1), to two old schools of thought, which they term behaviourist and pregressive (these correspond to the first two frameworks of thought discussed above). The rapporteurs prefer recent research, with its emphasis on the concept of interaction and on communication processes. Social interactions can in fact account for both the child's cognitive and affective development. (This clearly corresponds to the third line of thought described above).

Returning first to the cognitive field, the authors stress (in section 1.2.2) the importance for the learning process of perceptions and the comparison of perceptions, including (in section 1.2.3) social perceptions of the pupil's «job». As for affective development, the next section points out (1.2.4) that it is again adults' perceptions of the child which determine his own «self-concept».

Tackling the teaching situation more directly, the rapporteurs again (in section 1.2.5) advocate the third approach, which focuses on social interactions in the classroom, and they then discuss (in section 1.2.6) study of the didactic contract which regulates these interactions and (1.2.7) interactions linked with formative assessment in greater detail.

5.2 The primary school in a changing world

The above theoretical framework, which is clearly centred on the interactive process, is then applied to formulation of an educational project which takes account of that process. The report successively discusses aims, means of achieving those aims, ie the organisation of the school, the functioning of the school and, finally, those responsible for its functioning: the teachers.

The progression thus moves from the aim to means of attaining it, and the psycho-social viewpoint becomes increasingly important, becoming essential to improvement of the school's functioning (owing to the role of interaction within the school community, where the communication problems are, as section 2.3 points out, the same as in the classroom).

5.3 Innovation, a response to the pressures and a tool for the necessary adjustments

The third chapter develops the points outlined at the end of the second, and is thus entirely written from the «interactive» standpoint, which is effectively summarised in the following quotation: «learn to function in a mixed system which combines distributive local initiatives with centralism in relation to some key principles».

Developing the same idea, the authors urge that those involved should have a say in decisions which affect them, but also conversely, that local initiatives should connect with aspects of national educational policy. They even refer explicitly to the «planning» and «interaction» policies based on the theories of Huberman and Miles.

The analysis of the case studies conducted during the project (in section 3.2) is purely descriptive, but examination of the factors which impede or facilitate innovation (in section 3.3) indicates the points which lend themselves to negotiation.

As for teacher training, this can be seen (section 3.4) as preparation for negotiated assessment.

5.4 Conclusions and recommendations

The same ideas are taken up again in the conclusion. The recommendations deal in turn with aims, the organisation needed to achieve them, and so the curriculum, innovations making it possible to correct malfunction in schools, the support needed for these innovations and, finally, action to be taken on Project No. 8. The interactive approach is present only by implication in these final pages.

This re-reading of the Final Report from a specific angle by no means excludes other possible readings. It would be equally easy to use the text to highlight the contribution made by the natural and human sciences to education.

To ensure that the above reading of the Report is not subjected to partisan interpretation, the conclusion will insist on the necessary complementarity of the three types of knowledge distinguished above.

6. Back to reality

Reality is inexhaustible. The only thing which changes when we discern a particular organisational pattern in it is our own interpretation of it. As in ambiguous figures, several different meanings can even be discerned simultaneously.

Action, however, cannot split reality into independent sub-units. The doctor who saves a child in Africa unintentionally aggravates the problem of world hunger. Because every theory sees only one aspect of reality, practice (medical, educational or other) must take clinical account of precisely those factors which the models ignore.

This is why there is no question of insisting on a single, exclusive approach. Educational technology has its place in education, as does psycho-analytical interpretation or the analysis of cognitive guidance structures. Other scientific conceptions will increase our possibilities of action, but will never ultimately determine exactly how we should act.

The purpose of this text has simply been to draw the attention of men of action reading this Report to a new and complementary vision of the school situation, centred on the role of social interactions. It would seem reasonable to suppose, as some research suggests, that the establishment of closer relationships with individuals (be they pupils or teachers) may lead them to involve themselves more fully, thus increasing their personal commitment and also allowing them to function more effectively.

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APPENDIX V

AGENDA

Chair: Mr Yves MARTIN
Doyen de l'Inspection Générale
de l'Education Nationale

Ms Marie-Claire ROLLAND
Inspecteur Général de l'Education Nationale

Monday 30 November

From 10 am	- Registration at Palais Acropolis (Room Hermès - Level 2)
14h30 - 15h00	- Opening of the Conference by Mr Didier LINOTTE, Rector of the Nice Academy
	- Speech by Mr Maitland STOBART, Deputy Director of Education, Culture and Sport, Council of Europe
15h00 - 16h00	- Presentation of the exhibition organised for the Conference (Agora 3 - Level 3)
	The exhibition will include the work of the 12 "Contact Schools" and three case studies carried out in France.
16h00 - 17h30	- Presentation of the Final Report of Project Group No. 8 by Mr Jean-Michel SIVIRINE, Inspector of the Essonne Academy, General Rapporteur of the Project Group
18h30	- Reception given by the Rector of the Nice Academy at the Rectorate (departure by bus at 18h00 - return at 20h00)
20h30	- Dinner at Palais Acropolis (Room Erato, Level 3)
Evening	- Meeting of the chairmen and rapporteurs of the working groups scheduled for Tuesday, 1 December (Hôtel PULLMAN - Room Matisse - 1st floor)

Tuesday 1 December

9h00 - 10h00 - Presentation in plenary session by Professor Jean-Richard CARDINET, Institut Romand de Recherches et de Documentation Pédagogiques - Neuchâtel - on "External assessment and self-assessment in the educational system". (Room Hermès)

10h00 - 10h15 - Break

10h15 - 11h30 - Discussion

11h30 - 13.30 - Group work devoted to the discussion of the Final Report

- 2 English-speaking (Rooms Gallieni - 2 and 1) (Rapporteurs: Prof. M GALTON (United Kingdom) and Prof. W WOLF (Austria)

- 1 French-speaking (Room Gallieni 5) (Rapporteurs: Mr G BAERT (Belgium), Chairman of Project Group No. 8)

- 1 Bilingual (Room Hermès) (Rapporteur: Mrs M THURLER (Switzerland)

13h30 - Lunch at Palais ACROPOLIS (Room Erato - Level 3)

15h00 - 17h30 - Group work devoted to the discussion of the conclusions and recommendations

. 1st English-speaking group: (Room Gallieni 1)
Chairman: Dr. A PAPADOPOULOS (Cyprus)
Rapporteur: Mrs S JÖNSDÖTTIR (Iceland)

. 2nd English-speaking group: (Room Gallieni 2)
Chairman: Mr P HONETH (Sweden)
Rapporteur: Mr D HOLLINGSWORTH (United Kingdom)

. French-speaking group: (Room Gallieni 5)
Chairman: Prof. J -P OESTREICHER (Luxembourg)
Rapporteur: Mr G MAVROIDIS (Greece)

. Bilingual: (Room Gallieni 3)
Chairman: Mr G H van den HOVEN (Netherlands)
Rapporteur: Mrs M H VALENTE-ROSA (Portugal)

17h30 - 19h00 - Presentation of the Project's audiovisual material. (Room Gallieni 3)

20h00 - Dinner at Palais ACROPOLIS (Room Erato - Level 3)

Evening

- Planning session within each of the two teams of rapporteurs. (Hôtel PULLMAN - Room Matisse - 1st floor)

(Final report:

Prof. M GALTON, Prof. W WOLF, Mr G BAERT, Mrs M THURLER

Conclusions and recommendations:

Mrs S JÖNSDÖTTIR, Mr D HOLLINGSWORTH, Mr G MAVROIDIS, Mrs M VALENTE-ROSA)

and drafting of a joint report by a single Rapporteur, chosen among the eight

Wednesday 2 December

9h00 - 10h30 - Group work devoted to discussing strategies for the dissemination of the Project results and its follow-up (Chairmen and rapporteurs will be the same ones appointed for the Tuesday afternoon). One of them will be chosen as Rapporteur for drafting a joint report.

10h30 11h30 - Presentation of the Project's audiovisual material (Room Gallieni 3)

12h00 - Reception by the Nice Municipality - Palais ACROPOLIS (Agora 3 - Level 3)

13h00 - Lunch at Palais ACROPOLIS (Room Erato - Level 3)

14h30 - 16h30 - Discussion of the Project Group's Final Report and of the conclusions of the working groups

16h30 - 17h00 - Closure of the Conference by Mr Louis BALADIER, Directeur des Ecoles

17h30 - Reception by the Ministry of Education - Palais ACROPOLIS